[illegible], E-5 (1922-1924)1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

THE WASH-BASIN

A third supernatural element which must be in good condition if a Bella Coola is to prosper in life, is a *nuxʷlaxta*, wash-basin. In the land above, *Alquntám* has a large one filled with water which, having been constructed by himself, is replete with power. When a child is born, a small part of this receptacle, with its contents, is reserved for him; the supernatural artisans choose the actual section, but it is *Alquntám* who gives them the ability to do so. A fortunate man, whose ventures are successful and to whom goods are attracted, is said to have a good wash-basin; whereas the ill-luck of an unfortunate person is attributed, among other reasons, to the small size of his supernatural vessel. The Bella Coola have no clear ideas about the connection between an individual and his wash-basin. Some state that it remains in the land above; others believe that its intangible essence comes to a child at birth and grows up with him, always near his body, as if it were the offspring of the basin in the land above. As long as it remains in motion the owner continues in good health and prosperity, but if it becomes sluggish he falls ill. Long ago, shamans knew how to reanimate a wash-basin, but since the time of the first people, when supernatural ability was common, this has been a lost art. Senile decay is attributed to forlornness of this possession.

Rivers were, being a creation of *Alquntám*, in akin to the water in his basin above. Boys are always advised to bathe in the river as grown; the act is termed *dzâlaxsam*, a word connected with *nuxʷlaxta*. A prayer is uttered while washing. The combination of verbal appeal and the application of water strengthens the petitioner's wash-basin and so increases his chances for prosperity. Until a few years ago, this practice was almost universal. Water is always considered a strange substance, obviously a supernatural creation, and believed to be the chief means of sustenance for a child after being weaned.*

*This may be a mere rationalization.

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

Causative Medicines

Medicines of Infancy

789 856 *To Cause Tallness*

As soon as the umbilical cord is cut, blow upon it and pull it out; the infant will grow up to be tall and big.

The following medicines are applied four days after birth:

The infant is washed, formerly in a circular cedar or cottonwood basin, and the remedy pressed against its body while drying. Some families prefer to wait until the child is able to crawl.

To Cause Strength (three means)

[824] [825] (1) Collect four pieces of bark, each from a different tree where a grizzly bear has scratched. Place them in the infant's wash-bowl, then warm them at a fire and rub over his body. This ensures him the strength of a grizzly bear.

(2) Collect four water-smoothed, green stones from the river. Place them in the infant's wash-bowl, then warm them at a fire and rub over the body. After four days, return the stones to the river.

[825] (3) Warm the body of an octopus, beaver, or wolverine in the smoke of a fire and gently press the carcass against an infant's body, saying:

"Please, may he be like you."

This provides the child with the strength of the animal used.

To Cause Long Life

[824] [824] Collect four pieces of wood which have been rolled hard and smooth in a landslide. Boil them in the infant's wash-bowl, cool, then re-warm them at a fire and rub them over the body. This makes him strong and healthy, able to endure all dangers and weaknesses even those caused by a sorcerer. The principle is that the child will be as hardy as the wood proved

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924)1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

itself to be by withstanding the crushing weight of stone and earth. An old Kimsquit man expressed the firm conviction that his great age was the result of this treatment soon after birth.

To Cause Imperviousness to Cold

Kill a water ouzel, warm it at a fire, then press it against every part of the infant's body. This makes him as heedless of cold water as the bird. A merganser may be used in the same way, or the foot of one be placed in the child's hand and pressed as his fingers clutch it.

To Cause a Quarrelsome Disposition

Burn the nest of wasps and rub the ashes on the infant's face. He will become as bellicose and quick to resent injury as the insects. One old man who habitually beats his wife explains that this is involuntary, since he was treated in this way when a child. Fighting is no longer allowed, so the only person on whom he can exercise his martial ardour is his wife. The woman regards this treatment as a matter of course and the reason is accepted as valid by her associates.

To Cause Success in Thieving

Kill a pack-rat, warm it at a fire, and rub the carcass lightly over the infant's body. This will make him as successful a thief as the animal. Other methods are to cut off a foot and put this so the infant clutches it in his fingers, or to rub its hands with the ashes of a burnt rat.

To Cause Success in Singing

Catch a live robin or *cmoomoonk* (probably one of the thrushes), warm it at a fire, and rub it lightly against the infant's throat, saying:

"May he be a singer like you."

Then release the bird, and the child will grow up a songster. The following story is told of the power of the *cmoomoonk*'s song:

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924)1948
NEA Bellacoola NEA

To Cause Ability to Understanding the Speech of Ravens

It is well known that when ravens croak, they are really speaking, but their language is unintelligible except to one who has learnt it by means of a medicine. One of these is the following:

Catch a raven alive and cut a small piece of flesh from its body, beneath the left wing, taking care not to kill the bird. Release it, after having fed the morsel to the child. An infant so treated will grow up able to learn from ravens of the approach of raiding parties, storms, visitors, and all other news which they constantly circulate in their loud calling. It is said that the last person so endowed was the father of a Kimsquit man about forty years of age in 1922. His ability lasted throughout childhood but he lost it through infraction of a taboo.

The following medicines are used between the ages of one and two:

To Cause Long Life

One year after birth, holes are pierced through the lobes of the ears and the nasal septum. In the beginning of time, *Algunisiw* told the forefathers of the Bella Coola that if this were not done, the boy or girl would die young.

To Cause Ability in Hunting

When the umbilical cord of a female infant falls, her father places it within the knot-hole of a tree, where it is protected from rain but where it rots and is forgotten. A boy's is preserved with care. The parents wrap it in soft goat's wool and place it in the box where the father keeps his most cherished possessions; this causes the child to be careful, and to grow up with a tendency to treasure his acquisitions rather than to dispose heedlessly of them. As the first anniversary of his son's birth approaches, his father begins to observe ceremonial chastity, endeavouring to estimate the time so that its culmin-

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924)1948
NE5 Bellacoola NE5

F32

hers during his absence. As soon as she had found the figures, she called in all the people, showed them her discovery, and suggested throwing them into the fire. Some objected, pointing out that if *Kâlut* had been using them, their destruction would cause his death. It was decided to test him, as no one told the lover that he had been found out, and he suspected nothing on his return. When he went into another house, *Xwe'xwe* placed the figures near the fire; immediately, *Kâlut* tried to lie down at the edge of the one near him, and was restrained only by some of the bystanders. This proved his guilt conclusively. *Xwe'xwe* washed the figures to destroy their power, which caused *Kâlut* to lose his desire to enter a fire, and at the same time destroyed the love of the two girls for him.

This medicine can be made only by a skilful carpenter; its real potency lies in the ingredients though the figures cause it to work more speedily.

To Strengthen Virility

F33
F34
F25

This medicine is used by old men.

Catch a porcupine alive and cut out a quill from near its tail so that the blood flows freely. Prick the penis with the quill until the human blood mingles with the animal's. Potency follows at once.

To Cause Conception

F42
F49

A medicine was formerly known to cause a first conception, but it has been forgotten. A mother, however, who has just lost an infant, can ensure the birth of another by bringing a stone from the cemetery four days after her bereavement. If she leaves this beneath her bed for four nights, and then throws it away carelessly, anywhere, she will soon be pregnant.

To Prevent Conception

A medicine with this effect was formerly known but has been forgotten.

2:34:McIlwraith E-1 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

To Cause Birth of a Child of the Desired Sex

If a boy is desired: The pregnant woman must have prepared for her a miniature bow and arrows on which she sleeps for four nights and then throws into the fire.

If a girl is desired: The pregnant woman must have prepared for her miniature tools used for beating cedar-bark on which she sleeps for four nights and then throws into the fire.

To Cause Easy Delivery (two means)

(1) The pregnant woman must boil stalks of stonecrop in water and drink freely of the decoction.

(2) A variant of the medicine already described can be applied during pregnancy. Strike the back of the woman with one or more porcupine embryos. The thrower must remain in concealment and the woman to be benefited must be unaware of what is about to be done.

To Cause Increased Flow of Milk

Heat pods of *Sedum Spathulifolium* (Hook) and apply them as a poultice to the breasts of the nursing mother.

MISCELLANEOUS MEDICINES USED BY ADULTS

To Cause Energy

Take the paw of a freshly killed beaver in one hand and put it with the other, saying:

"Please, may I be like you."

This ensures that the man or woman will always work hard, like a beaver.

To Cause Long Life

Pick up a stone, spit on it four times, saying:

"May I be strong like you," and put it down carefully.

The basis of this medicine is the belief that toads are capable of resisting greater pressure than other animals. For example, if one is caught in an otachen net, it survives the crushing weight of fish and water and is alive when the net is emptied, though all other living animals so enmeshed are killed.

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924)1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

It is said that one man accidentally sucked when spitting on a toad, and swallowed the creature. It lived within his stomach for fifty years, causing no discomfort though its master could feel it moving, and its singing could be heard at intervals. This brought him no supernatural power, although he was enabled by it to live to a great age. When at last he died, the toad came hopping out of his throat and was carried respectfully to the river by his friends who covered the creature with eagle down and dyed and undyed cedar-bark.

Some of the rites already described with regard to animals and fish are similar in nature to this medicine.

To Cause Obesity

A medicine was formerly used by chiefs to make them fat and important-looking, but details of it have been forgotten.

To Cause Ability in Singing

Catch an *apuun i* (varied thrush?) alive and pat it four times against the throat of the woman to whom it is desired to impart the art, saying:

"May she be a singer like you."

Release the bird and the woman will become a good singer.

This bird is considered by the Bella Coola to be the finest songster among British Columbia birds, and they say that many animals and fish, including even the halibut, gather to hear its singing.

To Cause Ability in Hunting

There is a poisonous plant which, when eaten, almost kills the eater. If he recovers, he is henceforth endowed with great ability as a hunter. The species could not be ascertained.

To Cause Change in Weather

If a cold wind is desired: Heat the penis of a mountain goat or beaver at a fire.

If rain is desired: Wash the penis of a large buck and throw it into the ocean or a river, saying:

2:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

As they grow older the plainness of feature is more pronounced, accompanied by increasing heaviness of body (see Plate 16). Many of the adults are corpulent and move with slow, awkward gait. As a rule the men have great strength and are capable of prolonged and arduous exertion, particularly in paddling; in fact, constant use of canoes may have developed this powerful, ungainly build. Few are good walkers or packers; such, if they are found, usually belong to the lighter interior type. Among the grown people the face, though unbeautiful, often has a kindly expression, even becoming attractive in laughter or when a friendly grin spreads from ear to ear. With advancing age the prominent nose seems to grow larger, frequently becoming almost aquiline (see Plate 17). Many of the older people assert that this was even more common in former times. In time the face becomes lined with wrinkles and the body appears to shrink (see Plate 18). The teeth are in many cases worn down to the gums; this seems to cause no discomfort though an old person cannot utter the glottal stops and velar sounds with which the language abounds without emitting a fine spray of saliva. They are absolutely unable to pronounce several of the Bella Coola words, while the constant spitting is a disagreeable feature of their conversation, particularly to an investigator striving, often vainly, to record sounds accurately. The deep wrinkles of old women give them a benign "grandmotherly" expression, which makes them more attractive in extreme age than in youth (see Plate 19). Senile decay is so frequent that the return to infancy in mind as well as in physical powers is regarded as normal.

Among the coastal tribes hair on the face is not uncommon, but in this characteristic the Bella Coola are pre-eminent. *Nearly all the men have quite mustaches, at least;* many have a heavy growth, and several are full-bearded. That this was due to white mixture was assumed at first, but no evidence could be found to support this view. There are a number of half-breeds in the community but they are no more hirsute than the full-blooded Indians. Razors are now almost univer-

2: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

#192

L

[825] *Lakhkhic*: Kimsquit man mentioned in ancient story.
la'kic: Squirrel.
Laqumaic: 1—One of the first men to settle at *Qumqu'a* in the beginning of time.
2—Man sent down west of Kwsmo in the beginning of time.
[463] *Lawaiyas-i'*: Name of a predatorial warrior; the word is said to have originated in Kitkatla but has remained for many generations in Kimsquit.
La'qulc: Atnarko River, northern fork of the Bella Coola.
Lalhmuk: Assumed name of a Kimsquit man.
Lalomkila, "The Brother Of [of Goana]": Predatorial name of one of the first settlers at *Snaiait* in the beginning of time. This may be the same word as *Lalomkila*.
Lalomkila: Another name for *Tsaalalic*, the supernatural hunter. This may be the same word as *Lalomkila*.
[825] [886] [426] [583] *Lalomsmkinic*: 1—"The Beautiful": Supernatural name of Omen.
2—Ancient name of a Kimsquit woman.
Lalqualalic: Return in old age to the thoughts and actions of infancy, senile decay.
Lamlaic: To repay indebtedness of any kind, especially presents received at potlatches.
Lamlamalaic, "A Paying": An arrangement by which a man's son-in-law gives him as "wife" an infant female relative by way of repayment for his expenses in connection with the weddings of his own daughters.
Lapmaic: Wrestling or shoving.
Lasaic: Abbreviated Cannibal rite.
Laqaic: 1—Famous Bella Bella chief.
2—Assumed name of a Kimsquit man.
Lelcaic: Mask.
Lem: Tool for making vertical incisions in the bark of cedar trees.

A

Lelcamkila: Former man living in the beginning of time.
Lelelaic: Ancient name of a Kimsquit man.
[825] *Lelic*: 1—Copper.
2—Unidentified town on the outer coast, mentioned in a story of the beginning of time.
3—Chief of this town.
Lelicmaic: Daughter or chief of the town of Copper.
Lelmelelel: Copper names acquired by the first settlers at *Snaia* in the beginning of time.
Lelmlelic: Man's name, created by the first settlers at *Alalla*, in the beginning of time.
Lelmlelqa: Name taken for himself by one of the four settlers at Kimsquit in the beginning of time.
Lelnalic: Ancestral name of a Kimsquit woman.
Lelomay: Assumed name assumed by one of the first settlers at *Ayalaid* in the beginning of time.
Lelomx, "The Copper One": One of the first men to settle on the upper Kimsquit River in the beginning of time.